The British Film Trade Pledge

(In celebration of the Digest's Sixteenth Birthday)

I hereby pledge myself to give (without obligation of any kind) 25% of the bookings at my theatre, or theatres, to British Films, providing there is such a percentage available, that the price is equitable, and the quality measures up to the average films which I am accustomed to play.

Signed .....

Name of Theatre ..... *City or Town* .....

Province .....

Number of Pictures (features) played during 52 weeks .....

Please fill in this page and mail to

RAY LEWIS,

Canadian Moving Picture Digest,

259 Spadina Ave., Toronto.

Observations

By The Editor

THE RE-OPENING recently, in Ottawa, of the former Keith house, re-named RKO Capitol, places this house under the combined management of the Famous Players Canadian Corporation, and Radio-Keith-Orpheum (Canada) Limited. The RKO and Famous Players line-up is, however, not a record one, for just prior to the period of the Paramount-Publix control in Canada, RKO and Famous Players had entered into an agreement covering several of the RKO houses in Canada, those which had been the personal property of the late E. F. Albee, and which had been acquired by Famous Players, and those theatres which belonged to the RKO group.

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WHEN the RKO Famous affiliation had been entered into, the officers of the RKO made the agreement, so they said, under the supposition that the Famous Players was operating as a Canadian chain of theatres. The Paramount Publix control was not expected; and later on had to be accepted.

The re-naming of the RKO Capitol, and the announcement leads us to conclude that the agreement of affiliation is to be continued, although at that time we were informed the contract only covered one year.

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THE OTTAWA Evening Journal announces that Mr. J. M. Franklin will continue to manage the house, but the house "will now have behind it the vast amusement resources of this coast to coast circuit, thus affording theatregoers of this section with screen entertainment equal to any theatre on the American continent, along with the same courteous service to its patrons which has made the Capitol theatres of New York, Montreal, Toronto, and other key cities famous throughout the world."

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MAYOR J. J. ALLEN officially opened the theatre under its new name, and congratulations to the management followed. Incidentally, but important by way of Entertainment, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "Politics," with Marie Dressler and Polly Moran, was the feature.

While we are on the subject of this re-opening of a theatre, with the Mayor officiating, the Mayor's presence induces us to conclude that Entertainment is sufficiently of public interest to induce, not only Mayor Allen to grace the occasion, but has inspired the appearance of other Mayors, in many villages, towns and cities across Canada.

Entertainment, as represented by the theatre, has not only had the distinction of being visited, in an official capacity, by civic officials, but Provincial, and Federal representation has not been an unusual, but a frequent event.

The reason for such appearances being none other, but a confirmation of Public Belief, that the Theatre is an institution of Public Service, and is in the Public Interest.

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DURING the War, the theatre was utilized for the showing of propaganda films, deliberately presented to influence public opinion, toward supporting conscription, War Loans, etc., etc.

It is still a medium of propaganda; and was recently pronounced as such by our lady member of Parliament, Agnes McPhail, who mentioned that, with the Screen as an important factor, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honorable R. B. Bennett, had successfully launched the Conversion Loan.

Can we then, with these facts before us, state that the Screen, or theatre, is not of Public Interest; and that its control is not a matter of public interest?

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WE RECALL the brilliant presentation, and summing up of Mr. Strachan Johnston, K.C., Counsel for Famous Players Paramount Publix, dealing with the question of "When is a Combine a Combine and when is it not?", the interpretation of the Combine Act from the angle of Public Interest, during the Government Investigation. Mr. Johnston, for his clients, argued against the Public Interest angle, but the Commissioner, Peter White, K.C., not only found that a Film Combine existed, but that this Combine, plus another, operated to the detriment of the public.

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THAT there is a Combine is so evident, that we feel, as does the editor of the "Quebec-Chronicle Tele," who editorially stated, "Because it has long been a matter of more or less common knowledge. the public is probably much less interested in the official finding that a moving picture combine exists in Canada, within the meaning of the Trusts and Combines Act, than in learning just what the competent authorities propose to do about it."

The editorial continues, "In a general way, the purpose of the Combine is to maintain a monopoly in Canada for American pictures, and, after that, to force the local exhibitor to accept whatever pictures certain distributors choose to release to him. This Combine is made possible only by an interlocking between the producers, the distributors and the theatreowners, which is obviously contrary to the public interest, since it excludes from this country many artistic productions of relatively superior merit, and enables the producers to foist upon theatre-goers any trash they choose to grind out, no matter how inferior in character."

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THERE are many more equally illuminating paragraphs in this editorial, which any exhibitor can read for himself, and which would furnish interesting reading for the Attorney-Generals. The publication of this editorial was on Wednesday, July 8th, 1931.

The last paragraph being "straight from the shoulder," reminiscent of Carl Laemmle's Independent Policy Talks, we take pleasure in quoting it: "Those who have been connected with, or involved in the Combine, should realize that 'the jig is up.' They may 'clean house' either voluntarily, or under legal compulsion, and we can only suggest that the first-named course is likely to be the least painful to themselves, what the American Industry does in the United States is purely the business of the American people, but if it wishes to operate in Canada, it must do so in conformity with Canadian law and order."

British Empire Service League, in Session, Toronto, Passes Resolution Encouraging Distribution British Films

Show Business

(Special to Digest from Winnipeg.)

Equipped with motion picture cameras possessing an exceptionally high rate of speed, and with films sensitive to all the colors of the spectrum, three explorers and scientists, representing the United States Government, are in Winnipeg en-route for Churchill, Man., where they propose to film the Aurora Borealis, as a preliminary to the scientific investigations of Arctic atmosphere phenomena which will be conducted next year by parties sent by all nations interested in Arctic explorations.

These combined investigations are to be made next year because that is the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the first meteorological station in the Arctic regions.

In charge of the party is Capt. Flavel M. Williams. His companions are A. Louie, assistant scientist and camera man, and Robert Marshall, color expert. If they cannot get what they want at Churchill, they will try to get further north. Their stay in the north will last about six weeks.

An additional interest they will find awaiting them will be the loading and the departure of the first grain cargoes from Manitoba's ocean port, to Europe. They will photograph the events of this historic occasion in true colors.

Next year, Capt. Williams and nine other scientists, accompanied by a crew made up from the Byrd Antarctic expeidtion, will go to Fort Conger, in Grantland, not far from Greenland, in connection with the fiftieth anniversary investigations.

"Churchill is the ideal location at this period of the year," said Capt. Flavel M. Williams, who is in charge of the expedition, "because it is on a direct line between the auroral pole at Fort Conger and the magnetic pole and in the path of the maximum light frequency of auroral waves." What this means is that aurora will be seen in her best colors and shimmies at Churchill. Fort Conger is on Grantland, not far from Greenland.

The greatest auroral display is expected in about a week's time, but Capt. Williams and his colleagues will stay in the north six weeks. They have other things to do besides photograph the northern lights.

One of their purposes is to determine the height of the display which they will accomplish by photography, triangulation and astronomical observations. Another is to discover if the auroral phenomenon is connected with static electricity and terrestrial magnetism.

Capt. Williams says that he deduced the theory that static electricity and terrestrial magnetism were closely associated when he eliminated static electricity from gasoline trucks by providing an outlet for it in the form of a chain attached to the chassis and dragging on the pavement.

The saving of human lives and millions of dollars by preventing explosions due to the accumulation of static electricity in moving metallic bodies like gasoline trucks may seem a far cry from the aurora borealis, but one thing leads to another in science.

"Trucks running in an east-west direction or at right angles to the terrestrial magnetic lines of form," Capt. Williams said, "showed a forty per cent increase of static potential over trucks travelling north-south or parallel with the lines of force."

Ultra-violet rays thrown off by sunspots striking the ionized portion of the stratisphere, which directly reflects radio waves to the earth, in other words ultra-violet rays from the so-called "radio Mirror" are probably the cause of the aurora, in the opinion of Capt. Williams.

To get the complete range of color in the aurora, a double negative back to back in the camera will be used, each negative sensitive to one-half of the spectrum. Eskimos will provide the human element in the movie, copies of which will be given to the Canadian National Railways and the Canadian Government for education purposes.

The policy to be pursued at the RKO-Winnipeg Theatre, Winnipeg, former Orpheum vaudeville house, will be determined shortly when Mr. Fitzgibbon, the General Manager for Canada, arrives. Vaudeville will not go back to the Capitol this season, it is stated, and the RKO people may decide again to go into the RKO, Winnipeg, which has been the home of Winnipeg's leading vaudeville bills since 1908. There will be an expenditure of $30.000 in new seats and other improvements carried out first. There is still some uncertainty as to whether vaudeville will go into Winnipeg this season, however, and a "picture alone" policy at the Winnipeg may be continued. Mike Goodman who has been managing the R.K.O. Winnipeg, is now managing the Capitol, Winnipeg.

Several of the second run houses on Main Street, Winnipeg, have reduced prices from 10 cents in the afternoon and 15 cents at night. Their patrons are largely the working class, artizans and skilled mechanics.

Preference Urged For British Films

The British Empire Service League, in session recently at the Royal York Hotel, by unanimous resolution stressed the co-operation, of their various constituent organizations, toward the fostering of British Films in Canadian theatres, even to the extent of giving British Films a preference.

The clause read in part: "That the British Empire Service League records with regret the circulation of propaganda which is harmful to films made within the Empire, as a result of which many theatres have not encouraged the showing of such films. It expresses its appreciation of the splendid progress which is being made in the production of films within the Empire by British producers and recognizes the importance of this medium as a vital factor in the development of Empire trade, and urges the constituent organizations to take such steps as may be possible in their respective parts of the Empire to persuade all theatres to give preference to films made within the Empire."

Toronto Monetary Times states Loew's Inc. is not over-capitalized, is well established, and enjoys large measure of "public good-will"

Round About the Studios

Kann's European Trip Postponed

As the Washington immigration officials have intimated that in the future it will be impossible to obtain entrance papers for foreign stars engaged by theatrical concerns, George Kann, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer supervisor, has postponed his trip to Europe. Mr. Kann was intending to scout for foreign talent.

Metro's New York office is doing all in its power to persuade the officials of the necessity of foreign talent in foreign pictures, but immigration authorities hold that there are already too many foreign players in Hollywood.

Columbia Consummates Deal with B. S. Moss

Columbia Pictures will have a permanent first run outlet on Broadway for its entire Showmanship Group according to an announcement issued by that company. Through a deal consummated with B. S. Moss, Columbia productions will be shown at the B. S. Moss Broadway Theatre during the coming season. The theatre which has previously housed legitimate productions will, on September 19, open as the home of spectacular revues, novelties and first run pictures.

Doris Lloyd In "Devotion"

When Doris Lloyd came to Hollywood several years ago it was with no thought of a picture career, but solely to visit her sister, Mrs. George K. Arthur, wife of the popular comedian. However, offers of stage and film work persuaded her to lengthen the visit and eventually to remain as one of the screen's most popular character actresses. Miss Lloyd will shortly be seen with Ann Harding in the latter's RKO Pathe starring picture, "Devotion."

Browning to Direct M-G-M Mystery Film

"Freaks," a mystery story with a circus background, will be Tod Browning's first directorial effort since his recent return from Europe.

Willis Goldbeck is working with Browning on the details of this script.

Browning directed a large number of Lon Chaney pictures, and has always favored stories with a strong element of the macabre or the mysterious.

"The Kick-Off" In Production

"The Kick-Off," the latest of the Hal Roach - Boy Friend comedies, is now in production. The story revolves about the popular pig-skin sport, that made Notre Dame famous, and is said to have several unusual angles.

The picture was scheduled to start several weeks ago, but was postponed owing to the building of sets. The cast includes David Rollins, Gertie Messinger, Mickey Daniels, Mary Kornman and Grady Sutton. George Stevens is directing.

Pathe News Shows Greenland Air Pictures

Pathe News is currently showing Captain Wolfgang Von Gronau's exclusive pictures of Greenland's mystery ice-cap taken by the daring flyer as he soared over this hitherto unknown land on his recent sensational 4,500 mile flight from Germany to the United States.

Captain von Gronau appears personally in the introduction to the pictures and while they are shown he gives a vivid first hand description of the vast mystery land and the hazards he encountered in looking for a new air route to the New World.

These Pathe News' pictures taken from von Gronau's famous flying boat reveal clearly icy wastes no white man has ever seen and lived to tell about.

Regina Films Latest Production

"The Verdict of the Sea," which promises to be an exciting picture with a real "he-man" interest, is to be the next Regina Films' production.

This film which, as its title suggests, is concerned with sea-faring characters, will be directed by Sydney Northcote, and will go into immediate production.

"Courage" Latest Montgomery Vehicle

"Courage" will be the title of Frederick Lonsdale's newly-completed original story for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and this will be a starring vehicle for Robert Montgomery. Lonsdale is now on his way back to London and will work on his second original screen script there, planning to return to the California studios in about two months with the finished story.

Louise Fazenda Added To Cast of "Cuban"

Louise Fazenda has been added to the cast of "The Cuban," new Lawrence Tibbett picture now in production at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios, and will play the cinematic wife of Jimmy Durante.

Miss Fazenda has appeared in a wide variety of comedy roles in recent films, among them "Viennese Nights," "Misbehaving Ladies" and "The Broadway Hoofer."

W. S. VanDyke is directing "The Cuban," with Lupe Velez in the principal feminine role opposite Tibbett.

Picket Injunction Given United Amusement Corp.

The United Amusement Corporation, a Canadian chain of theatres, operating about nineteen houses in the City of Montreal, was given an injunction, in the Superior Court, to restrain the operator's union, with whom they are having a fight, from picketting in front of their theatres. The injunction holds until the case is heard in the courts.

The company, after receiving the injunction took action for $10,000 damages against the union officials.

May Shelve "Murders In The Rue Morgue"

Universal has cut the budget on "Murder in the Rue Morgue" from $130,000 to $90,000, and have practically made up their minds to shelve the picture. When they decided to modernize the picture from the 1850 period, the director, Robert Florey, walked out.

Barbara Stanwyck Returns to Columbia

Barbara Stanwyck is returning to the Columbia studios, where she will make three pictures, alternating these with her productions for Warners. Miss Stanwyck will receive $25,000 a picture, instead of $20,000 for her first, and $25,000 for the last two.

M-G-M to Utilize Music in Productions

According to one of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer officials, Metro will in the future utilize musical numbers in its feature productions. These scores will be inserted in the picture only when in perfectly logical sequence. The company now has a musical library of about 25,000 pieces. There are three musical pictures in production at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios at the present time.